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C O N F I D E N T I A L ASUNCION 000511

SIPDIS

STATE WHA/BSC
NSC FOR KIM BREIER

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/17/2015

TAGS: [PHUM](#) [BO](#) [PA](#) [PDEM](#)

SUBJECT: PARAGUAY SUPPORTS BELARUS RESOLUTION AT UNCHCR

REF: STATE 64376

Classified By: Political Chief James P. Merz for reasons 1.5 (b) and (d).).

¶1. (U) On 4/13, UK Charge (representing the EU) and PolCoun met with Acting Foreign Minister Jose Martinez Lezcano urging Paraguay to vote against the no action motion on Belarus and in favor of the resolution before the UNCHR conveying concerns about human rights abuses in Belarus. Martinez confirmed Paraguay would vote against the no-action motion. He noted that he had been visited by the Belarusian Ambassador to Argentina who is accredited to Paraguay and maintained that the human rights situation was improving. Martinez also inquired about the position of Russia (Paraguay announced recently that it intends to open an Embassy in Moscow and seeks to expand commercial relations with Russia).

¶2. (U) We reminded Martinez that Paraguay had voted in support of a similar resolution before the General Assembly last September and that all reports by independent observers from both the OSCE and the NGO community indicated that the human rights situation had only further deteriorated since then. Russia was sensitive about public criticism of Belarus but privately shared some of the concerns conveyed about Belarus and were hardly fond of President Lukashenko. Martinez was not prepared to commit himself on the spot but signaled Paraguay would likely vote in favor of the resolution on the Belarus in Geneva on 4/14.

¶3. (C) On 4/14, Polcoun followed up with MFA Human Rights Director Julio Duarte who advised that Paraguay had decided to vote in favor of the resolution on Belarus. Duarte noted that the decision had been hotly debated within GRULAC and that Paraguay had come under considerable pressure to abstain on the resolution by States that had been similarly approached by the Belarusian delegation. In the end, he maintained that Paraguay had been swayed by evidence of serious abuses in Belarus and had decided to buck the pressure from Belarus and other Latin American states including Argentina and Brazil.

KEANE